

Supporting The Passage Of A05518/S03891 To Amend The Volunteer Firefighter's Benefit Law For The Expansion Of Specific Health Condition Coverage

Referred to: The Public Health and Social Services Committee (Chairman Lopez and Legislators Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner and Roberts), and The Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee (Chairman Briggs and Legislators Fabiano, Lapp, Maio and Rodriguez)

Chairman Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr. and Legislators Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner, Lopez and Roberts offer the following:

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 05518 and Senate Bill 03891 have been introduced in the 2015-2016 Legislative Session to amend the Volunteer Firefighter's Benefit Law to expand coverage to include cancer of the digestive, hematological, lymphatic, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast, and reproduction systems; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Senate passed S03891 on June 18, 2015 at which time the bill was delivered to and died in the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment recognizes cancer disabilities for firefighters exceed that of the average adult population; and

WHEREAS, a 2013 report, published in the Journal of Occupational Environmental Medicine, found that firefighters are 62% more likely to develop cancer of the esophagus, 21% more likely to develop intestinal cancer and 26% more likely to develop breast cancer than the general population; and

WHEREAS, this firefighter cancer legislation was first introduced in the 2011-2012 New York State Legislative session; and

WHEREAS, A05518/S03891 will provide coverage for any melanoma or condition of cancer affecting lymphatic, digestive, hematological, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast and reproductive systems, resulting in total or partial disability or death to a volunteer firefighter, who successfully passed a physical examination on entry into firefighter service; and

WHEREAS, the bill further provides should the initial examination fail to reveal any evidence of such a melanoma or condition, it shall be presumptive evidence that it was incurred in the performance and discharge of duty unless the contrary can be proven by competent evidence; and

